

The CP Connection

The Community Partner Newsletter

Issue 15

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"I'm the afterlife of the party!"
~ Casper the Friendly Ghost

Happy Halloween, MHLA!

A Message from the MHLA Program Director:

Hello Halloween! My favorite holiday of the year, I love the creative costumes, neighbors partying in the streets, adorable kid costumes and of course...a time to honor the passing of our loved ones. Equal parts celebration and serene, I wish you all a spooky Halloween and a comforting All Soul's Day.

In this issue, we have a few important updates and I hope you will take the time to read them. First, we want to take a few minutes to revisit the expansion of Substance Abuse Disorder (SUD) benefits in the MHLA program. As you may recall, the MHLA program added SUD services to MHLA on July 1st. Since then, very few patients have taken advantage of the service.

We know this could be because many patients do not self-identify as having a problem, and even if they do, they may not want to get help. Some clinics provide SUD services on-site and do not need to refer. However, we want to make certain that clinics are doing everything they can to screen and refer patients in need of SUD treatment services to the Los Angeles County's Department of Public Health's

(DPH) Substance Abuse Prevention and Control Division (SAPC).

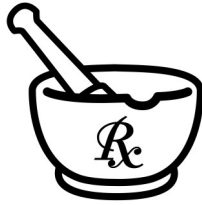
In addition, we are likely to bring on new clinics to participate in Pharmacy Phase II as a pilot site, maybe as soon as January. Are you interested in being a pharmacy pilot site? Want to learn more about what that would mean? There are lots of advantages, including one-on-one help and hands-on attention (from Venetgra and yours truly) during your roll-out, having your pharmaceuticals paid for by the MHLA program, and, if you have registered DHS Central Pharmacy, having medications mailed directly to your patient's house! We have several clinics that have already volunteered to be pilot sites in January but you may also be interested. Please email me at aviste@dhs.lacounty.gov if you would like to talk more about it. I promise it won't be scary!

Boo!



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MHLA Expanding Pharmacy Phase II Pilot!

The Pharmacy Phase II pilot has been up and running for almost four months! We're excited about the progress we have made—over 76,000 prescriptions filled, including at retail pharmacies like Ralph's, and also through mail-order service through DHS Central Pharmacy. The patients that we have surveyed that had their drugs mailed to them have universally said they really like the service.

We have several clinics that have asked to join the next "wave" of pilot sites. Have you been thinking about it as well? What would that mean for you if you volunteered?

Pharmacy Phase II *expands* pharmacy options, but does not take away what you already do. If you have a dispensary, an on-site pharmacy, or a relationship with an existing pharmacy, you can keep it. But under Pharmacy Phase II, MHLA participants will have additional options to get their medicine, such as at other retail pharmacies as well as through DHS Central Pharmacy, where we will mail the participant's medicine directly to their home or clinic at no cost.

Under Pharmacy Phase II, you will be reimbursed for the drugs you dispense. If your patients use a retail pharmacy, Ventegra will pay the pharmacy directly. And if you're a pilot site, you'll get **lots** of hands-on help from MHLA and Ventegra as you transition. Want to learn more? Interested in possibly joining on our next wave of pilot sites? Email Amy Luftig Viste, MHLA Program Director, directly at aviste@dhs.lacounty.gov. Let's talk!

Update on Substance Use Disorder Treatment Services

MHLA's Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment services began on July 1, 2016 and we would like to thank the following CPs for referring patients for treatment in the first three months: All for Health, Health for All, Inc., Arroyo Vista Family Health Foundation, JWCH Institute, Inc., Los Angeles Christian Health Centers, South Bay Family Health Care, and Watts Healthcare Corporation. Nicely done, clinics!

From July to September 2016, a total of twelve MHLA participants (five men, seven women) have entered into SUD treatment as part of a referral from a MHLA clinic. Unfortunately, we know more people than this need help. The MHLA program recently surveyed some clinics to find out more about why utilization was so low in the first three months of the added benefit. There are a number of reasons, including that patients do not believe that they have an SUD problem, participants feel there is stigma attached to accepting this service or they just refuse SUD assistance.

It was also clear that some participants can not read or do not read the information that is given to them. This may be a reason why some MHLA participants are not aware of these SUD services.

MHLA hopes all clinics will educate their patients about this vital and free service. With more in-depth screening and counseling, we can help provide participants with the treatment they may need by addressing their fears and apprehensions.

More information can be found on SAPC's website: publichealth.lacounty.gov/sapc/findtreatment.htm. Patients can also self-refer to SAPC by calling **1-888-742-7900**. Fact sheets in English and Spanish about free SUD treatment can be found on the MHLA website under the section called "For MHLA Participants." Thank you!

The CP Connection

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